

Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2441

INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY QUITO

USCINCSO

SECDEF

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 11505

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, OTRA

SUBJECT: PROPOSED VISIT TO THE U.S. OF PERUVIAN ARMY CHIEF OF
STAFF PEDRO RICHTER PRADA

REF: LIMA 10856

1. WE HOPE DEPARTMENT WILL EXAMINE CARFULLY BOTH THE PROBLEMS
AND THE OPPORTUNITIES INVOLVED IN THE PROPOSED VISIT TO THE
UNITED STATES OF PERUVIAN ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF GENERAL RICHTER,
BEFORE MAKING A DECISION. IT SEEMS TO US THAT THE PROBLEMS
ARE BOTH GENERAL, AND SPECIFIC TO CHILE.

2. AS TO THE FORMER, NEED NOT BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE REACTIONS IN
THIS PART OF THE WORLD IF THE PERUVIAN ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF
WERE OFFICIALLY, AND IN SOME DEGREE DEMONSTRATIVELY, RECEIVED
IN WASHINGTON NOT LONG AFTER A CONSUMMATION OF THE SOVIET SU-22
PURCHASE. THIS IS PARTICULARLY SO IN THE LIGHT OF THE EARLIER
HISTORY OF PERU'S PURCHASES FROM THE USSR, INCLUDING THE ONGOING
SUPPLY OF TANKS. IT SEEMS TO US THAT THROUGH THESE ACTIONS
PERU HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE ARMS RACE IN THE AREA, ENHANCED
THE EXISTING REGIONAL ARMS IMBALANCE, AND INCREASED LOCAL TENSIONS.

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3. WE READ REFTEL AS CONVEYING A PERUVING INTEREST IN USING THEIR

ARMS PURCHASES FROM THE USSR, AND THE TREAT OF A CLOSER SOVIET-PERU RELATIONSHIP, AS A MEANS OF OBTAINING MORE MILITARY ASSISTANCE FOR SVTMMA IT MAY OR MAY NOT BE IN OUR INTEREST TO PLAY ALONG WITH THIS OBJECTIVE. WE WOULD THINKG THE U.S. SHOULD AVOID A POSTURE OF COMPETING WITH THE SOVIETS TO COURT PERU'S MILITARY LEADERS AND SUPPLY ARMS TO PERU. RECEIVING GENERAL RICHTER NOW COULD CONSTITUTE A SIGNAL OF A KIND WE SHOULD NOT CONVEY.

4. FROM THE STRICTLY CHILEAN STANDPOINT, A VISIT BY RICHTER WOULD BE REGARDED AS A FURTHER DEPARTURE FROM THE USG'S FROMER POLICY OF EVENHANDEDNESS. AS THE CHILEANS WOULD SEE IT, THE GOP HAS NOT ONLY CONCLUDED A SIGNIFICANT PURCHASE OF SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS FROM THE SOVIETS; IT HAS TOSSED A SPANNER INTO THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR A BOLIVIAN CORRIDOR TO THE SEA. TO CHILEANS, TI WOULD BE A PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE MOMENT FOR SUCH A VISIT.

5. WE SUGGEST THAT IT WOULD BE PREFEREABLE NOT TO HAVE A VISIT BY GENERAL RICHTER DURING DECEMBER OR JANUARY. WE ASSUME THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WILL WISH TO CONSIDER HOW IT INTENDS TO DEAL WITH THE REGIONAL ARMS SITUATION AND ITS CONFLICT POTENTIAL.
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